

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4687

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 28514

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJ: U.S. ACTIONS IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 254167

1. I BELIEVE THAT OUR REPORTING HAS GIVEN THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER WASHINGTON AGENCIES A GOOD PICTURE OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND AND WE ARE CURRENTLY PREPARING AN ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED SEPTEL.

2. WITHOUT BELABORING THE OBVIOUS, WE HERE ARE PARTICULARLY MINDFUL OF THE FACT THAT ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM COUNCIL (NARC) HAS INDEED ASSUMED EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THAILAND AND IS COMMENCING TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, THERE ARE SOME ASPECTS OF ITS PERFORMANCE WHICH WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH TO APPEAR TO ENDORSE. FOR THIS REASON, I HAVE BEEN MOVING VERY DELIBERATELY AND HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO HANDLE THE NARC CIRCUMSPECTLY. UNFORTUNATE OR POTENTIALLY DESTABILIZING EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK HAVE INCLUDED:

A) THE USE OF EXCESSIVE FIRE POWER BY THE POLICE AGAINST THAMMASAT STUDENTS. (ADMITTEDLY, THIS WAS DONE UNDER ORDERS OF THE SENI GOVERNMENT BUT THE NARC SUFFERS FROM PICTURES OF OCTOBER 6 EVENTS CARRIED IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA.)

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B) A LACK OF ACTION OR AUDIBLE CONDEMNATION BY THE NARC OF THE

BRUTALITY OF THE CIVILIAN MOB WHICH INCLUDED RED GAUR, VILLAGE SCOUTS AND OTHER ELEMENTS PLAYING A PARA-MILITARY ROLE AROUND THAMMASAT CAMPUS ON OCTOBER 6.

C) VAGUE ALLEGATIONS OF COMMUNIST PLOTS, PUBLIC BURNING OF COMMUNIST BOOKS, AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY OF A PLAN FOR "REEDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CAMPS FOR INDIVIDUALS CONSIDERED TO BE POTENTIAL DANGERS TO SOCIETY."

D) UNSUCCESSFUL COUNTER COUP ACTIVITIES BY GENERAL CHALAT HIRANYASIRI (WHO WAS FORCED TO RETIRE) AS WELL AS AN UNEXPLAINED DEPLOYMENT TOWARD BANGKOK OF 9TH DIVISION ELEMENTS OCTOBER 11 WHICH WAS LATER COUNTERMANDED.

E) THE SUDDEN ORDERING OF INFLUENTIAL AND AMBITIOUS GENERAL WITHUN YASAWAT, THE FORMER COMMANDER OF THE SGU IN LAOS, TO THE EMBASSY IN TOKYO AS "SUPERVISOR OF STUDENTS" ON OCTOBER 13.

F) PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE THANIN'S OCTOBER 13 SPEECH OUTLINING HIS AND THE NARC'S VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THAILAND WHICH INCLUDED DEFERRING THE RETURN OF DEMOCRACY TO THAILAND FOR TWELVE YEARS.

3. IN THE FOREGOING CONTEXT, IT SEEMS TO ME TO BE A MISTAKE TO BE THE FIRST AMBASSADOR TO HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ADMIRAL SA-NGAT CHALOYU, GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN OR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NARC. SUCH A MEETING WOULD RESULT IN A BLAZE OF LOCAL AND FOREIGN PUBLICITY AND WOULD CAUSE A TREMENDOUS SENSATION HERE.

4. WHAT I HAVE DONE IS AS FOLLOWS:

A) SINCE OCTOBER 12, WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING AN APPOINTMENT FOR DCM BURKE WITH KRIANGSAK OSTENSIBLY TO INTRODUCE THE NEW CHIEF JUSMAG, BUT IN FACT TO BOX THE COMPASS WITH KRIANGSAK.

B) I AM TRYING TO MEET DISCREETLY WITH ADMIRAL SA-NGAT THIS WEEKEND. OUR NAVAL ATTACHE, WHO HAS DONE A SUPERB JOB HERE, IS ON INTIMATE TERMS WITH THE ADMIRAL AND I HAVE ASKED HIM TO LAY THIS ON.

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C. I HAVE INVITED THE KING'S PRINCIPAL PRIVATE SECRETARY TO LUNCH OCTOBER 19 AS A MEANS OF GETTING THE PALACE SLANT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND A WAY OF TRANSMITTING OUR VIEWS DIRECTLY TO HIS MAJESTY.

D) I HAVE MET WITH BOTH ANAN PANYARACHUN AND WITH THANAT KHOMAN, WHO IS FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR TO THE NARC. THE TALK WITH THANAT IS BEING REPORTED SEPTEL. ALTHOUGH I DID NOT MENTION THE

POSSIBILITY, I GOT THE IMPRESSION THANAT WOULD BE ASTOUNDED IF I MARCHED IN TO CONFER WITH THE NARC LEADERS BEFORE A GOVERNMENT IS FORMED.

5. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT I SHOULD MEET QUIETLY WITH ADMIRAL SA-NGAT AND MAKE THE POINTS YOU AUTHORIZED IN REFTTEL WITH REGARD TO OUR DESIRE TO CONTINUE OUR COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THAILAND. AT THE SAME TIME, I BELIEVE I SHOULD EXPRESS SOME CONCERN OVER BOOK-BURNING, BRAINWASHING CAMPS AND THE QUITE EVIDENT SHORT-COMINGS OF MILITARY RULE. SOME MEMBERS OF THE NARC AND SOME ELEMENTS OF THE THAI PUBLIC BELIEVE THAT THE ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE OF THE NARC AND OF THE NEW PRIME MINISTER WILL OPEN UP A CORNUCOPIA OF AMERICAN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC largesse. THANAT CONFIRMED THIS TODAY. FURTHERMORE, ALTHOUGH HE GAVE NO REASON FOR THE RECALL OF AMBASSADOR UPADIT FROM WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION, I THINK IT MAY WELL BE CONNECTED WITH A THAI EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE KHUKRIT/SENI FOREIGN POLICIES WERE A TEMPORARY ABERRATION AND THAT THE U.S. SHOULD RETURN TO A FAR MORE GENEROUS AID POLICY TOWARD THAILAND.

6. AS YOU CAN SEE, I THINK THE NARC NEED US A GOOD DEAL MORE THAN WE NEED THEM, AND I HOPE YOU WILL AGREE THAT THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR NOT MAKING THE FORMAL APPROACHES YOU SUGGEST AT THIS TIME AND TAKING THE RISK OF APPEARING OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE NARC.

7. IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, I TRUST YOU WILL APPROVE THE ACTIONS WE HAVE TAKEN AND THAT I HAVE PLANNED. THEY SEEM APPROPRIATE TO OUR OBJECTIVES AND TO THE CROSS-CURRENTS WE CONFRONT HERE.
WHITEHOUSE

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